



## GOVERNOR'S REMARKS

Friday, 03/30/2007 7:20 am

### **Governor Discusses Investment to Protect Southern California's Water Supplies**

GOVERNOR: Good morning, everybody, and thank you very much for being here today with all of us. I want to talk today about the urgent need that we face here in southern California, and all over California, to keep our water supplies safe and reliable, and also to ensure that we have enough water to meet the needs of our growing population.

When you look behind me here, you see the endless amount of homes that are being built here, and the amount of people that are moving into Los Angeles and also to California. As a matter of fact, it's expected that in the next 20 years we will have a population increase of approximately 30 percent, which is an equivalent of adding three cities the size of Los Angeles to California, and already our water supply is being stretched thin. This is one of the driest seasons this year on record, and we are expecting to have an increase in demand here in Los Angeles alone of 25 percent.

So with all of this population growth that is expected here in southern California and all over California, we don't want to have another water rationing, as we have had in the '80s and '90s. Because of that rationing the water districts in Los Angeles, Orange County, and in San Diego, increased their rates and imposed surcharges and forced mandatory conservation all over the state. Orange County right now is experiencing some serious troubles, a possible water emergency they're experiencing right now because of repairs to some of its pumps. This should be a lesson to all of us about how valuable and how vulnerable our water supply in California really is.

We need to conserve water; that is very, very important. But at the same time we need to also build more above the ground water storage. And this is why in my State of the State Address this last January I have proposed a 5.9 billion dollar water infrastructure and management plan. This will create enough above the ground water storage to supply up to 1 million additional households per year.

This will also help us to deal with the affect of climate change, because the experts have warned us that we will reduce, or we will see a reduction of 25 percent of our snowpack by the year 2050, which means there will be more water runoffs, more floods in the winter, and less drinking water in the summer. And it is very important that when we see this increase of runoff that we capture that water so we have enough drinking water in the summer. Otherwise, we will have less water in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, which is the main water source for 25 million people in California. Now, 25 million people, that is two-thirds of our total population. And to make sure that we can count on a safe and reliable water supply for generations to come, my plan also includes 1 billion dollars to improve the Delta's sustainability.

Water infrastructure is no different than when we talk about transportation infrastructure or the infrastructure in our building more schools. As we see an increase in population, we must build more. We must build more roads, we must build more schools, and we must build more above the ground water storage. This is not a Republican or a Democratic issue; Democrats and Republicans all drink the same water. And we have the same needs, it is very clear, so I am looking forward to working with the Legislature to resolve this issue and to build more above the

ground water storage.

And now I would like to bring out someone that is an expert on this issue, that has dealt with this for many, many years, who feels very passionate about it, and this is Senator Cogdill, who is the author and sponsor of SB 59 that deals with that issue. Please welcome Senator Cogdill. (Applause)

SENATOR COGDILL: Thank you all very much for coming out this morning. We greatly appreciate your interest in this extremely important issue. And I certainly want to commend the Governor for standing up and taking on this issue, and being a real champion for above ground storage, something that's desperately needed in this state as we look to the future and the changes that we know are coming, not only from our population growth, but certainly from the challenges the climate change are going to present. The Governor mentioned that we certainly will not be able to allow, or to rely rather, on our snowpack that we've been able to do for so many years in this great state to regulate our water throughout the dry season, and we're going to have to build facilities that allow us to act in a more proactive way to see to it that we don't go through prolonged times of drought.

You know, it's kind of interesting right now as you look at this debate. And yesterday the news came out about our snowpack for the year, and unfortunately it's very low, it's at 46 percent of normal. And all of the commentators were quick to add that it's okay, though, for this year, because we've got plenty of water in our reservoirs that we were able to store during the rainy season last year that was above average. So it points out how important reservoirs, above ground reservoirs, are to our system and why we need to be making improvements in that area that, again, we've neglected for so long.

SB 59, though, does a number of things, and one of the reasons why I'm so proud to be associated with it, and to have been able to work with the Governor and DWR and his administration on this, is that it looks at a more holistic approach to our problem and deals not only with the important needs for additional above ground storage, but it also allocates 500 million dollars more money, I think, than we've ever allocated before in this state to groundwater programs and enhancements, and also a billion dollars to Delta sustainability. I know you've all been following the debate over the last few years about how fragile our Delta is, and what it means to, I think it's over 23 million Californians and their water supply.

So this bill has, again, resources in it that can start to move us down the path to deal with all these important fixes that need to be made to this system, and does so in a very responsible way. Again, I think it's important to point out, as we look at the storage options that are called for under SB 59, that we're really talking about expansions of an existing system that are, in many ways, very environmentally sensitive. Sykes Reservoir in the north has been referred to as a reservoir for the 21st century because it's completely off stream, and it will be used during heavy runoff years to store water so that when we have the drought or the dry years, we can bring that water back into the river and not only provide for our needs and the needs of our economy, but to provide for the fish, to make sure that the salmon runs can continue. So it has a very real environmental component to it.

Sykes Reservoir is very much the same way. It's on the San Joaquin River drainage above Millerton Lake, and with the recent decision there relating to the rewatering of the San Joaquin, again in order to protect fish. We're going to need additional water in that watershed so that we can continue to support that economy that has grown up over the last 50 years, and at the same time provide for the environment. So we think the approach that SB 59 puts forward is very responsible, very cost effective.

And I also want to point out that 2 billion dollars of the 5.95 will have to come from beneficiaries, those folks that will actually contract for the water, and they have to have signed up for 75 percent of that before a dollar of the public's money will be spent. So again, we think it's a very responsible approach to the problem, and one we hope that you can all get behind and support. And we all need to be letting our legislators know, as we move into this budget season here, that this is a very important bill, and it needs to be forwarded.

At this time I'd like to introduce someone that I think you're all well familiar with, someone from southern

California here. Jeff Kightlinger, who is with the Metropolitan Water District, is going to talk to you a little bit about this important subject. Jeff? (Applause)

MR. KIGHTLINGER: Thank you very much. I really want to applaud the Governor and the Legislature for the importance and the emphasis they are putting on water supply and water infrastructure, because as our state grows it's absolutely critical that we address some of these projects that have been overlooked now for essentially a generation. I particularly applaud their emphasis on water storage, both ground water and surface water storage; that's the supplies that get you through in times of drought.

I also want to thank the Governor for his emphasis on the Delta. He's formed a blue-ribbon task force to come up with a Delta vision by the end of the year. Southern California gets up to a third of its water through the Delta, and quite bluntly, the Delta is broken and it needs fixing, and without a fix our water supply will be at risk in the future.

Finally, in southern California we put heavy emphasis on local projects; water reclamation, recycling, conservation projects. Those are projects that are good year in and year out, they respond whether or not there is a drought. And so southern California has made tremendous investments. That's why you don't see us panicking even in a year like this, where it was the driest year ever in southern California, an extremely dry year on the Colorado River, an extremely dry year in northern California. But we have the supplies that can handle these types of ups and downs and the cyclical nature, but we need to make continued investments in that infrastructure so we will continue to have that supply.

I want to thank the Governor and everyone here, and I also want to introduce our next speaker, Randy Fiorini, the President of the Association of California Water Agencies. Randy? (Applause)

MR. FIORINI: Good morning. Californians have been well served by the statewide water supply system that's been in place for the last three decades, but that system has not kept up with the growing population, or the expanding economy. Thanks to water use efficiency efforts, urban southern California today uses about the same amount of water, of imported water, that it used 20 years ago, even though the population here has grown by 3 million. This kind of innovation is taking place all over California.

Along with this kind of innovation, though, we need additional investment to meet our future needs. Northern California surface storage and the Delta are the major source of water for much of southern California. Expanding and improving those systems is our insurance against drought and other natural disasters like earthquakes that can jeopardize our water supply, a system relied upon by millions of Californians, both north and south. Senate Bill 59 provides the funding we need to make those improvements and secure California's water future. ACWA applauds the Governor for his leadership on water issues and for making investments in water infrastructure a top priority. (Applause)

GOVERNOR: Thank you very much. And if you have any questions about this very important issue, please feel free.

Q: Governor, how tough do you think it's going to be to get this approved? I mean, the budget is pretty tight as it is.

GOVERNOR: Well, let me just say that I think anything like that, at this magnitude, that it always tough. I think that, as you remember last year, I have proposed a 68 billion dollar infrastructure package and we negotiated for almost a half a year. It went back and forth, and then finally the Legislature kind of felt comfortable with a 37 billion dollar infrastructure package, and we couldn't get the prison reform that we wanted, and we couldn't get the above the ground water storage we wanted. But we were very happy, because this was the first big step in three decades, basically, to start rebuilding California, and to build the roads that we need and to build the schools

we need, to fix the levees, and to build affordable housing.

So this year as I said last year, I'll be back, so this year we are basically back again and say let's pick up the pieces, let's build more schools, let's build more infrastructure and transportation, and let's not leave behind building more prison beds and building more above the ground water storage.

So yes, it is difficult. But you know, that's why I have the job, to be up there in Sacramento and to fight for those things that have not been addressed for decades. Water storage is very important. The people need water. As I said earlier, we have an increased population, a tremendous growth in California, so therefore we need to think about the future and build more above the ground water storage.

Q: Do you think the public in a way takes it for granted, because the water has always pretty much been there, and nobody really thinks that it could ever run out?

GOVERNOR: I think that the people of California are very much part of this whole thing, and they have been great partners in rebuilding California. Like last year, we asked the people to approve the infrastructure package, and to approve to build more schools and more roads, and to fix the levees and build more affordable housing, and they voted yes on all of those measures. So I know that this year they will also say yes. We need more water, we need to protect our future, our future generations, so we have reliable and safe water, and they will vote yes again. Thank you very much. Yes, please.

Q: Actually, Governor, I was wondering in addition to your very busy schedule I understand yesterday you had something of a rescue to fit in, and I just wondered if I could ask you what happened, and if the girls that you helped yesterday had any response, any words for you afterwards.

GOVERNOR: I think many times when you do big events like this, and where people stand around, children stand around, soldiers stand around, all kinds, older people, young people, when they stand around and they lock their knees, there's a danger that they go and start feeling dizzy and faint. And it has happened in the past, I have been to several events where this has happened. I always hope that it was not what I said.

But you know, the important thing is that when you see it sometimes you don't see it, because it's happening behind you. But in this particular case yesterday I saw, it was very clear as I looked over, I saw this girl fall on the ground. So, you know, you go as quickly as possible there and help them up and get them out, and get them fresh water and relax, and sit down a little bit and so on.

And what was odd about it was, as I was coming back and I was saying to all the people that were standing, all the kids that were standing behind, I said, relax, loosen up your knees and relax, because it's very hot in here, another one dropped down, and then another one went out. So we helped that girl, to get her out of there. So, you know, those things happen. But the key thing is to respond very quickly and to help them. Okay? Thanks.

Q: Going back to the water issue, what is your vision of the future 10 years from now, let's say, if we don't do anything?

GOVERNOR: Well, I think it's very clear that we cannot ever not do anything. I mean, inaction is the worst thing. So I think the people have sent me to Sacramento to go and to address the issues that have not been addressed for decades. And so we know that if we don't create more above the ground water storage and under the ground water storage, and do the conservation all together, we're going to have water rationing. We're going to run out of water, because you can't have the same water supply and at the same time have an increase in population.

And the other big thing that we are fighting, which is something that is created by us, is global warming. Global

warming has created the reduction in our snowpack, and as the experts have said, we have a reduction of 25 percent by the year 2050. So now we have this enormous amount of melting and water runoffs, and we don't capture it. This is a perfect opportunity to capture this water and have drinking water for the future, for the summer. So this is why we need to build dams and to have above the ground water storage. Thank you very much. Thank you. (Applause)